

Wise Words from the Good Doctor (Seuss)

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Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You're off to Great Places!
You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself
any direction you choose.

—Dr Seuss (*Oh, the Places You'll Go*.
Random House Children's Books; 1990)

These words from the good doctor are often seen at graduation—brimming with potential, they remind the reader that we have within us the tools we need to succeed. They convey the optimism that exists upon new beginnings: nothing can stop the brains in our heads and the feet in our shoes from helping us to do great things.

What's less popular in greeting cards and feel-good social media posts are the words that come later in Dr Seuss's poem:

You will come to a place where the streets are
not marked.
Some windows are lighted. But mostly they're
darked.
A place you could sprain both your elbow and
chin!
Do you dare to stay out? Do you dare to go in?
How much can you lose? How much can you win?

We have all seen our fair share of unmarked streets, darked windows, and sprained chins over the past three years in the profession of pharmacy. Whether it be the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our health care system or the health human resource struggles we face nationwide, hospital pharmacy professionals have weathered more uncertainty in these last few years than many have ever experienced before. We lack a unified vision for pharmacy practice in Canada, which—as noted by Zack Dumont in a previous Executive Commentary

(<https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.3412>)—has left us all without a guiding North Star upon which to focus our collective professional efforts.

Yet we have had successes. We have learned many valuable lessons from the pandemic, as shared in the latest *Hospital Pharmacy in Canada Survey Report* (<https://www.cshp.ca/docs/pdfs/HPCS-2020-21-Report-ENG.pdf>), and we have struck a CSHP task force to craft our vision for the profession we are all so passionate about. We have begun to build meaningful and fruitful relationships with the Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada and the Canadian Association of Pharmacy for the Environment, and we have also started the critical work of determining how CSHP can best support sustainability efforts within hospital pharmacy practice in response to our changing climate.

We are now at an inflection point. How much will we dare? What can we win or, conversely, lose? And in what direction will we choose to steer ourselves? CSHP is embarking on our next strategic planning cycle, and the resulting plan will be more outward-facing than our last one. We know our resources are not infinite, so we must be mindful of how our national organization can have the greatest impact on pharmacy practice issues. This may mean travelling down unmarked streets and rethinking how we support our members in their pursuit of excellence in patient care. It will mean working collectively to develop a plan that sets CSHP on a path to greater places than we have ever been, guided by the unified vision we are crafting now.

It may seem daunting to some, but with the brains in our heads, and the feet in our shoes, we will chart our next course together. Today is our day, so let's get going.



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